



December 12, 2019

Hon Brad Hoylman
New York State Senator
Legislative Office Building, Room 310
Albany, NY 12247

Dear Senator Hoylman –

We at Village Independent Democrats have long admired and cherished your history as a champion of good government, and we share your dismay at the even longer track record of corruption and Big Money influence that has accrued in Albany. We've fought for years for campaign finance reform, and were very excited last spring when, thanks to the Blue Wave, there was a real possibility that it would happen.

We were sorely disappointed when "the three people in a room" decided that an unelected commission was better suited than seated legislators to the job of writing arguably the most important legislation of the session. That decision signaled that campaign finance reform was in trouble. When it became clear additionally that the Public Finance Campaign Commission had been weaponized for a political vendetta against the Working Families Party we knew that the fix was in.

Our very worst fears were borne out on December 1 when the commission released its report. The recommendations were, variously, inadequate, unworkable, poorly enforced, slow, and anti-democratic, and they were lashed together so that no part, however flawed, could be excised without dooming the entire package. (Jay Jacobs moved that the commission vote on separability during the first hour of the first meeting in August.) The whole package, warts and all, becomes law if the legislature fails to act.

We think that would be a real setback. The triumphs of 2019 will fade when the 2020 session convenes and the fight for fair elections begins anew. Democrats will be forced to answer for the compounding errors that resulted in bad law at a time when they should be preparing for upcoming elections. We who will be carrying petitions in February certainly don't welcome the additional challenge.

There is still time to avert this unfortunate outcome. Decisive action on campaign finance reform in December eliminates the need re-engage in what should be an old battle in January.

We ask that you use the Senate Democratic retreat to impress upon your colleagues the importance of strong campaign finance law to the state and to the Democratic Party. It's the foundation upon which New York's democratic, progressive future will be built, it's what the voters want, and allowing anything less disadvantages the conference.

We ask that you convince them of the urgency of convening before December 22 to bring the commission recommendations in line with the existing parallel Gold Standard legislation prepared in consultation with the Brennan Center.

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And we ask that you and your colleagues convince Assembly of the same urgency.

We're very mindful that this is a big ask and a heavy lift. We wouldn't be asking if it weren't such a foundationally important issue. And we wouldn't be asking if we didn't believe firmly that you have the vision to see the need and the strength to carry it out.

Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

VID